Business Plan
2009-2010

NOVA SCOTIA

Labour and Workforce Development

Fairness, safety and prosperity

Table of Contents

Message from the Minister 3

1. Vision and Mission 4

2. Planning Context- Environmental Scan 5

3. Core Business Areas 8

4. Strategic Goals, Priorities, and Performance Measures 9

5. Human Resource Strategy 17

6. Budget Context 19

7. Information Technology and Communications 19

Appendix A - Labour and Workforce Development Organizational Chart 21

Appendix B - Labour and Workforce Development Agencies, Boards, Commissions, Tribunals and Committees 22

Message from the Minister

I am pleased to present the 2009-10 Business Plan for the Department of Labour and Workforce Development, our second such plan since our inception in 2008.

In its first year, the department engaged in a strategic planning exercise that engaged more than 800 stakeholders, partners and staff. The result is a four-year strategic plan that focuses on achieving a vision of fairness, safety and prosperity for all Nova Scotians by living, learning and working to our highest potential.

Using the new strategic plan, the department has reorganized to streamline service delivery and strengthen our accountability to the citizens of Nova Scotia. A four-year plan for office space and leaseholds is being developed for our service locations.

Goals for this fiscal year include the implementation of the Canada-Nova Scotia Labour Market Development Agreement, which transitioned federal employment support programming and approximately 100 federal positions to the provincial government on July 1, 2009. We will continue to work with other provincial departments and community partners on new services and opportunities for unemployed and low-skilled workers delivered under the Canada-Nova Scotia Labour Market Agreement.

This year, we will implement the *Fair Registration Practices Act*, which requires a fair and transparent process for professional licensing and occupational certification in Nova Scotia. We will implement changes to the Agreement on Internal Trade, which will help attract workers to Nova Scotia. We will continue the minimum wage increases that support our most vulnerable workers. The department will partner with stakeholders to implement new Atlantic Lottery Regulations, the multi-year Occupational Health and Safety operational plan, the new *Technical Safety Act* and regulations, and review the recommendations of the Pension Review Panel. A project is also underway to modernize regulations and procedures for our boards and tribunals to better serve Nova Scotians.

The department is developing tools to provide labour market information to better assist employers and employees to prepare for key trends and demographic cycles that impact our labour market. These tools, along with high quality apprenticeship and adult learning opportunities, support the development of a skilled workforce for Nova Scotia. The department is also working to provide information on best practices for employers and employees as they prepare for a possible H1N1 pandemic. With the support of employers, educators, unions, industry and community groups; the Department of Labour and Workforce Development is confident that it can help strengthen the labour market and prepare for the new economy.

Marilyn More
Minister

M J MacDonald
Margaret F MacDonald
Deputy Minister

1. Vision and Mission

Vision

Fairness, safety and prosperity for all Nova Scotians by living, learning and working to our highest potential.

Mission

Labour and Workforce Development will create winning conditions by fostering the social and economic well-being of Nova Scotians by:

- protecting Nova Scotia's people and property;
- anticipating and responding to workforce needs;
- promoting safety at work, home and play;
- ensuring fairness at work;
- supporting life-long learning; and,
- building capacity to seize opportunities

Strategic Principles

The department considers the following strategic principles in its business planning. These principles were developed as a part of the department's four-year Strategic Plan and will guide how we will operate:

1. **Partnerships**: Develop and strengthen policies, processes, structures and relationships to achieve outcomes both internal and external to the department.

2. **Shared ownership**: Share responsibility among stakeholders.

3. **Innovation:** Foster innovation both within Labour and Workforce Development and among our partners.

4. **Protection**: Ensure that businesses/individuals comply with legislation, regulation and best practices.

5. **Talent Development**: Develop our people to create a vibrant, healthy workforce.

2. Planning Context- Environmental Scan

The department has a broad range of responsibilities and in order to properly address them we recognize that we do not act in a vacuum. The department must be aware of the larger environment, as a large part of our work is determined by workforce trends and changes. There are several factors that significantly affect the department's work:

Financial

Key financial indicators changed rapidly in Nova Scotia in 2008. Gas prices and the world price of oil stabilized. The Consumer Price Index slowed at the end of 2008 to -0.2 per cent, and Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was stable, with little growth expected in 2009. Mortgage interest rates lowered through the year, with variable rates as low as 3 per cent and closed rates around 5 per cent. Major changes have occurred in our manufacturing and forestry sectors, as a worldwide downturn impacted our economy. The shift continued from a resource to a knowledge and service-based economy. The Canadian dollar lowered to $0.78 compared to the US dollar.

Demographics

Nova Scotia's workforce is affected by changes in our population. The latest Statistics Canada quarterly estimates indicate that the provincial population was 939,125 as of October 2008. Our labour force has increased to 497,800 workers; however, our unemployment rate in January 2009 was at 8.8 per cent. The unemployment rate for the rest of Canada was 7.2 per cent. The unemployment rate varies throughout Nova Scotia, with Halifax having the lowest rate (seasonally adjusted) of 5.6 per cent; eastern Nova Scotia having a rate of 14.8 per cent and western Nova Scotia having a rate of 9.2 per cent. Almost 50 per cent of our workers, or 221,000 work in the Halifax Regional Municipality. This really directs where a great deal of our operational services, for example, occupational health and safety services, should be focused.

Nearly one in three Canadian employers has difficulty finding skilled workers. The economy, though in a downturn, still has areas where there is a skills shortage, for example, in the need for nurses and Continuing Care Assistants. Pressure on colleges and institutes to meet the needs of employers is intense. Approximately 42 per cent of the skills shortages in the country are in occupations that require college or apprenticeship training, compared with seven per cent in jobs requiring university education. The apprenticeship system experienced noted growth in 2007-2008: a 17 per cent increase in the number of new apprentice registrations and a 41 per cent increase in the number of youth apprentice registrations.

Employment growth has slowed, offsetting some of the positive impact of higher average wages per employee. By 2017, exits (retirements) from the labour force are expected to exceed entrants (young workers entering the workforce for the first time), suggesting the labour force will go into decline and economic growth will begin to slow.

Nova Scotia's population is continuing to age; we have the oldest population in Canada, with a median age of 41.8 years (2006 Census). Between 2001 and 2006, the population under age 25 in Nova Scotia declined 6.5 per cent and the population aged 65 and over increased by 9.2 per cent. Retirements from the workplace are anticipated to be very high in the next 4 years, with labour demand being higher than supply by 2017.

In contrast to the rest of the population, the Aboriginal population is much younger. In 2006 approximately 44 per cent of our First Nations people were under 25 years of age as compared to 29.3 per cent for the general population in 2006.

In the 2006 census, 37,680 individuals identified themselves as a visible minority, which is 4.2 per cent of our population. At approximately 51 per cent, the largest visible minority group is African Nova Scotians.

Our population has higher levels of disability than other provinces, with approximately 20 per cent of the population reporting some level of disability. The Province will be targeting employment training and support to the disabled under our agreements with the federal government.

Growth Areas

There have been population shifts within Nova Scotia. The trend towards increased urbanization has continued with the Halifax Regional Municipality having the strongest growth (8.7 per cent between 1996-2006). The counties within a 90-minute commute to downtown Halifax (Colchester, Kings, and Hants) have shown stable or slight population growth. Eleven counties have experienced declines in population ranging from 0.9 per cent in Lunenburg County, to 17.1 per cent in Guysborough County.

Wages

Given the current age of Nova Scotians, strong wage growth is likely over the next ten years as people tend to earn the most during their working life between the ages of 45 and 55. However, this trend will go into reverse after ten to twenty years as people retire and are replaced by younger employees paid at lower rates. Over the coming years, we will increasingly shift from receiving income from wages to receiving income from pensions and savings sources. Some provinces, such as Quebec, have moved to adopt phased retirement to allow more retired workers to continue working on a part time basis. In Nova Scotia, only 41.1 per cent of the population contributes to an employer sponsored pension plan. This means that more Nova Scotians will be relying solely on the Canada Pension Plan and Old Age Security when they retire.

Nova Scotia has the highest minimum wage rate in the Maritime Provinces, at $8.60 per hour, effective April 1, 2009. The Province has put in place annual increases that will have minimum wage reach $9.65 per hour by Oct. 1, 2010. By 2010, minimum-wage employees working full-time would earn more than the low income cut off for a single person, a commonly used poverty indicator. Those sectors most impacted by the minimum wage are the retail, tourism, accommodation and food services sectors.

In Nova Scotia in 2008, the average annual weekly wages (including tips, commissions, and bonuses) were $674.58, compared to the Canadian average of $783.09.

Productivity

Labour productivity in Nova Scotia grew above the national average in 2006 at 1.4 per cent (vs. 1.0 per cent nationally); however, the Province's labour productivity remains 16.5 per cent below the national average and ranks third lowest in Canada. Nova Scotia has had a labour productivity issue for the last thirty years which may reflect an overemphasis on employment and not enough emphasis on capital investment and skills training.

At the same time, Nova Scotia has a very low level of work disruption due to strikes or lock-outs. The provincial rate of 0.015 per cent of time lost per year in Nova Scotia has compared well to the .02 per cent rate nationally, and this has been a consistent trend for the past decade.

Education

The number of Nova Scotians aged 25-64 with a post-secondary diploma, certificate or degree is near the national average (59.8 per cent vs. 60.3 per cent). According to Statistics Canada (2005/06), Nova Scotia's graduation rate was 82.3 per cent, fifth-highest in Canada and higher than the national average of 72.1 per cent. During the same period, the Province's graduation rate also grew faster than the national average.

For Nova Scotia, 82.2 per cent of people aged 25-64 with a university degree are employed, compared to 50.2 per cent of those with less than a high school diploma. The Nova Scotia Community College indicates that 91 per cent of its graduates are employed annually, most in jobs relating to their field of study.

In 2003, Nova Scotians (16 years and older) participated in the *International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey* that tested prose literacy, document literacy, numeracy and problem-solving. Thirty-eight per cent of Nova Scotians do not have the literacy levels necessary to participate fully in a knowledge-based economy.

3. Core Business Areas

In 2008-2009, the department developed its four-year Strategic Plan. The department has been restructured to effectively implement that plan and improve service delivery to Nova Scotians. The department operates along four core business areas:

1) Labour Services Branch:

The four divisions of the Labour Services Branch focus on resolving workplace disputes, workers' compensation issues and achieving harmonious labour relations; and to ensure compliance with minimum standards under labour standards and pension legislation. Improving the legislative framework and modernizing our business practices will be the major emphasis in the 2009-10 business year.

2) Policy, Planning and Professional Services Branch:

The two divisions of the Policy, Planning and Professional Services Branch focus on supplying policy and decision support services to the department, as well as providing the business services to support our leased premises and service outlets. Records retention and information and privacy services come under this business area.

3) Safety Branch:

The three divisions of the Safety Branch focus on the protection of people and property. The main focus is on the licensing and control of gaming activities, liquor establishments and amusements; the safety of equipment and buildings; fire safety; and safety at work.

4) Skills and Learning Branch:

The four divisions of the Skills and Learning Branch work collaboratively with a range of government, industry, labour, business, community, and education partners to design, implement, and evaluate policies, programs, and services that support attachment to the labour market and learning and skill development at home, at work, and in the community.

4. Strategic Goals, Priorities, and Performance Measures

4.1 Strategic Goal: Nova Scotians will have safe, healthy and supportive workplaces and communities.

Safe, healthy and supportive communities and workplaces enhance Nova Scotia's ability to prosper and provide for a better quality of life for the people of this Province. Positive and productive relationships among employers, employees and unions are in place creating a culture of fairness, safety and equity throughout the Province.

Strategic Priorities (4-Year Plan):

- Through programs and learning opportunities encourage individuals to adopt and practice a culture of safety at work, at home and within their community.
- Protect the economic and social interests of Nova Scotians as they relate to gaming, the sale of liquor, theatres and amusements.
- Improve compliance through education, inspections and strategic action to protect Nova Scotians and their communities.

2009-10 Priorities:

- Implement administrative tools to enhance compliance with occupational health and safety measures.
- Provide new temporary foreign workers with health and safety information in a variety of languages.
- Work in partnership with the Workplace Safety and Insurance System to inform injured workers and those on workers' compensation benefits of the retraining programs and opportunities that are available throughout the Province.
- Implement and monitor the compliance of retailers with the *Atlantic Lottery Regulations.*
- In partnership with the Department of Energy, amend the Nova Scotia *Building Code Regulations* in late 2009 to require a higher level of energy conservation for residential housing.
- In partnership with the Department of Education, implement a pilot program that will provide occupational health and safety training to grade 9 students in the Province.
- In collaboration with the Departments of Health and Community Services, the department is amending our Codes to increase the quality of life in long-term care facilities while implementing realistic life safety requirements.

Performance Measures:

Strategic Goal 1: Nova Scotians will have safe, healthy and supportive workplaces and communities.			
Outcome	**Measure**	**2009-2010 Target**	**Ultimate Target**
Nova Scotians will lose less time from work due to workplace accidents or illness	The duration of lost-time claims[1]	105 days	91 days or lower
Nova Scotians will lose less time from work due to workplace accidents or illness	New lost-time claims per 100 workers[1]	Maintain or lower the loss-time per 100 workers rate	Reduce lost-time per 100 workers rate to at or below the Canadian average
Improve inspection and compliance systems	Total number of inspectors with access to the ATS system	Increase to include the 30 inspectors in the Alcohol and Gaming Division	All inspectors in the department will have access to the system
Improve the protection of ticket lottery players	Compliance rate with the new *Atlantic Lottery Regulations*[2]	Will inspect/visit all retailers in the first year of implementation	95 per cent compliance with regulations

[1] Data Source: Workers' Compensation Board
[2] Data Source: AMANDA system

4.2 Strategic Goal: Nova Scotia has a fair, equitable and stable labour environment.

Harmonious labour relations are an important part of Nova Scotia's competitiveness. Diversity, inclusion, information sharing and adaptability are critical elements in the creation and maintenance of a stable labour environment. Employers and employees will take responsibility for building relationships and for achieving a common understanding regarding their respective rights, roles and responsibilities.

Strategic Priorities (4-Year Plan):

- Protect and balance the rights and interests of workers and employers regarding employment standards, injuries, and pensions within the context of current labour market conditions.
- Foster effective labour/management relations protecting employer, employee and union rights and benefits in order to secure labour market stability.
- Support inclusive and diverse workplaces and communities by increasing equitable access to the labour market.

- Establish department legislation and initiatives that incorporate current worker and workplace trends by assigning clear responsibility and accountability that will ensure Nova Scotia is responsive to change.

2009-10 Priorities:

- Improve service delivery to our agencies, boards and tribunals by updating regulatory forms and processes, and improving distribution of decisions to Nova Scotians.
- Improve pension legislative framework by implementing the recommendations of the Nova Scotia Pension Review Panel.
- Complete the development of an information sharing agreement with the federal government regarding temporary foreign workers and explore legislative protections for temporary foreign workers.
- Implement changes to the Labour Standards Code with respect to mandatory retirement.
- Implement the Aboriginal Apprenticeship Strategy, which helps ensure the participation of the Aboriginal population in the growth of a qualified and skilled workforce in Nova Scotia.

Performance Measures:

Goal 2: Nova Scotia has a fair, equitable and stable labour environment.			
Outcome	**Measure**	**2009-2010 Target**	**Ultimate Target**
Stable labour relations environment	Lost time due to strikes and lockouts	Meet or be less than the national average	Meet or be less than national average
Timely dispute resolution process for employees and employers in non-unionized workplaces	Average time for Labour Standards Code complaints to be assigned an officer	14 calendar days	14 calendar days
Timely remittance of contributions in a Defined Contribution pension plan	Follow up on notices of plans with overdue contributions	10 business days	10 business days
Streamline functioning of agencies, boards, commissions, tribunals	Improved forms and ease of access	Identify areas for improvement	All forms are available electronically and can be submitted online where possible

4.3 Strategic Goal: Nova Scotia is able to identify and respond to provincial workforce requirements.

By combining assumptions regarding the changing nature of work across industry sectors and analyzing provincial and national labour market information, the department is a champion for and a partner in workforce and human resource planning.

Strategic Priorities (4-Year Plan):

- Support active participation in the workforce by ensuring Nova Scotians have opportunities to access meaningful employment and appropriate skill sets.
- Provide the structure, processes, and supports to enable the portability and transferability of skills and the improved mobility of workers.
- Build the necessary infrastructure that develops and disseminates labour market information to support all stakeholders with workforce planning information to make informed decisions.
- Create a new workforce development framework that optimizes resources by integrating programs and services which involve multiple government and industry stakeholders.

2009-10 Priorities:

- Continue to implement the amended Agreement on Internal Trade changes, to support the portability and transferability of skills and mobility of workers.
- Implement the *Fair Registration Practices Act* to ensure a fair and transparent process for licensed professionals and the certified trades, particularly with regards to new immigrants to Nova Scotia.
- Update trade certification requirements for key occupations.
- Deliver transition measures to address shifting labour market requirements, including both declining and emerging industries.
- Continue to build the tools that will support workplace planning and enhance career planning, including the advancement of Career Options as the source for career planning and labour market information in Nova Scotia.
- Ensure the seamless transition of employment supports and services from the federal government into the Employment Nova Scotia Division.
- Develop a recruitment and retention program for the fire service in partnership with the Fire Service Association of Nova Scotia.
- Develop and implement a strategy for labour market information to produce and disseminate quality, accessible and relevant labour market information to our major stakeholder groups: employers, unions, individuals, government/educators, and advisors.

Performance Measures:

Goal 3: Nova Scotia is able to identify and respond to provincial workforce requirements.			
Outcome	**Measure**	**2009-2010 Target**	**Ultimate Target**
Modern trade certifications that reflect current standards	Number of regulations updated	All trade regulations will be updated	All trade regulations will be updated
Reduce barriers to labour mobility	Requirements imposed on workers certified in another jurisdiction	Change legislation and regulations to remove administrative burden that are inconsistent with the Agreement on Internal Trade	No additional requirements for workers to move to Nova Scotia
Usage of career planning and labour market information	Increased site traffic to the Career Options website	15 per cent increase in traffic	Clients and stakeholders will have the information they need to make informed decisions

4.4 Strategic Goal: Through flexible and responsive education and training programs, Nova Scotians will share in and contribute to the economic and social prosperity of Nova Scotia.

Social and economic benefits of workforce participation are clearly understood by individuals and through the communities across the Province. The department will support and provide opportunities for greater workforce participation for those who wish to participate and for those who are encouraged to participate. The department will support and encourage business and government working together to alleviate, reduce and prevent poverty in this province.

Strategic Priorities (4-Year Plan):

- Engage and empower people who are traditionally under-represented in the workforce by addressing barriers to education, training and employment.
- Provide and ensure Nova Scotians have access to flexible and responsive continuing education, career development and training programs, encouraging their full participation at work, at home and in their communities.

- Undertake continuous improvement and development of the adult education and training system to ensure relevance, timeliness and responsiveness.

2009-10 Priorities:

- Contribute to the development of a pilot program for Occupational Health and Safety education/training for Grade 9 students.
- Integrate occupational health and safety training into the curriculum for adult learning.
- Deliver effective and efficient client services to improve the skills of the unemployed to assist them in achieving meaningful employment.
- Develop and implement the Prior Learning and Recognition (PLAR) Strategy for the department.
- Increase learning opportunities for adult learners across the province, to help them gain literacy, essential, and employability skills.

Performance Measures:

Goal 4: Through flexible and responsive education and training programs, Nova Scotians will share in and contribute to the economic and social prosperity of Nova Scotia.

Outcome	Measure	2009-2010 Target	Ultimate Target
Improved delivery of LMA and LMDA services	Client satisfaction score	75 per cent of clients are satisfied with services	90 per cent of clients are satisfied with services
Increase the number of Nova Scotians who achieve trade certification	The number of Nova Scotians who achieve trade certification	Certify levels according to labour market demand	Certify levels according to labour market demand
Reduce accidents for young workers	Number of students receiving OHS training	Complete pilot program	Integration of program into core curriculum for Grade 9 students

4.5 Strategic Goal: In collaboration with partners and stakeholders, we will anticipate and plan for the challenges and opportunities for a changing economy.

In partnership with key stakeholders, the department will seize the opportunity to influence and support Nova Scotia's future as a leader and participant in developing a workforce that will both adapt and excel in a changing economy.

Strategic Priorities (4-Year Plan):

- Assist employers and other stakeholders in adapting to workforce opportunities and challenges arising from a rapidly changing external environment.
- Respond to and support the transition to a service and technology-based economy and workplace.
- Support responsive regulatory requirements where protections are not compromised and where flexibility helps Nova Scotians to prosper and to compete.
- Make evidence-based decisions through policy excellence throughout the department.

2009-10 Priorities:

- Streamline regulations and reduce administrative burden by implementing the *Technical Safety Act* and new regulations.
- Reorganize policy functions and implement service level agreements to enhance policy and business services.
- Prepare and implement plan for service delivery office locations for the department throughout Nova Scotia.

Performance Measures:

Goal 5: In collaboration with partners and stakeholders, we will anticipate and plan for the challenges and opportunities for a changing economy.			
Outcome	**Measure**	**2009-2010 Target**	**Ultimate Target**
Streamline regulations and reduce administrative burden	Reduce administrative burden	Reduce administrative burden for businesses under the TSA by 15 per cent	Reduce administrative burden departmentally by 20 per cent
Improve policy service	Per cent of clients that are satisfied with policy service	80 per cent of our clients will be satisfied with our service	95 per cent of our clients will be satisfied with policy decision

4.6 Strategic Goal: Labour and Workforce Development is a Preferred Employer

Develop, retain and attract talented and skilled workers, further strengthening an inclusive, high-performing and engaged workforce. Establish a corporate environment where people want to come to work, where their contributions and creativity are valued and recognized.

Strategic Priorities (4-Year Plan):

- Build a cohesive new departmental identity and engage staff in the process of identifying opportunities to collaborate and build new relationships within the department.
- Introduce a talent management framework that will help optimize staff development, retention, engagement and attraction.
- Develop a culture of value and recognition by investing in a positive workforce culture which incorporates employee development and wellness.

2009-10 Priorities:

- Improve employee engagement on committees and cross-department project teams as a means of learning new skills and acquiring knowledge of the department's operations.
- Develop a departmental Human Resource Strategy that will assist with succession planning and staff development.
- Initiate training tracking system for employee development.

Performance Measures:

Goal 6: Labour and Workforce Development is a Preferred Employer.			
Outcome	**Measure**	**2009-2010 Target**	**Ultimate Target**
Improved staff knowledge of department programs and services	Per cent of staff who have completed the orientation program	80 per cent of new staff complete orientation program	100 per cent of new staff complete orientation program
All staff have a Career Development Plan	Per cent of staff who have developed a Career Development Plan	80 per cent of staff complete a Career Development Plan	100 per cent of staff complete orientation program
Staff have a performance plans in place	Per cent of staff who have a performance appraisal in the past year	80 per cent of staff have a performance appraisal	100 per cent of staff have a performance appraisal
French Language Services	Overall compliance with French Language Policies will be 80 per cent or greater in 2009-2010	Compliance with French Language Policies will be 80 per cent or greater	Compliance with French Language Policies will be 100 per cent

5. Human Resource Strategy

As noted above, "Labour and Workforce Development is a Preferred Employer" is one of the goals identified in the department's 2009-2013 Strategic Plan. It is the department's objective to develop, retain and attract talented and skilled workers further strengthening an inclusive, high-performing and engaged workforce. We want to establish a corporate environment where people want to come to work, where their contributions, creativity and innovation are valued and recognized.

The 4-year, broad strategic priorities for the department are noted above.

The department will begin in this fiscal year with the development and implementation of a robust Human Resources Plan to address these priorities. The Nova Scotia Public Service Commission's employee survey 'How's Work going?' will provide the department with the baseline data required to move forward with appropriate measures of success and analysis. The Human Resource Plan will include such components as:

- a formal and active orientation program for all new employees.
- a transparent and objective methodology, which ensures that the development and training needs of all employees are met.
- the transition of Healthy Workplaces, Employee Rewards and Recognition, and Diversity Management Initiatives that were previously established with the Department of Nova Scotia Environment and Labour. Labour and Workforce Development will work with Nova Scotia Environment to ensure smooth transition of separate programs.

a) Healthy Workplaces
The Healthy Workplaces Initiative (HWI) will continue to support and integrate corporate HWI policy, programs and activities with the underlying goals of providing departmental health and wellness programming that will contribute to a supportive workplace. The objectives of the department include: review and evaluation of wellness initiatives, and encouraging the support and management of work/life balance issues.

b) Employee Rewards and Recognition
Through the Rewards and Recognition Initiative, the department seeks to provide effective programs and tools to recognize and value staff's contributions to departmental operations and to ultimately maximize employee engagement and organizational excellence. The goals of the initiative are to provide a variety of formal and informal recognition opportunities and implement initiatives that ensure employees receive informal recognition of good performance and formal recognition of outstanding achievement.

c) Diversity Initiative

The Diversity Initiative focus is on assessing the diversity climate of the department, developing and implementing a strategy to meet department and corporate diversity objectives and identifying ways to measure progress so that we become a diverse workforce that truly represents the public that we serve. The goals are to increase visibility and promotion of a diverse workplace, provide awareness training and development opportunities, encourage employee participation in diversity initiatives, and develop partnerships and collaboration that advance the creation of an inclusive, diverse culture.

Canada and Nova Scotia signed two agreements in June 2008: the Labour Market Development Agreement and the Labour Market Agreement. The Labour Market Development Agreement transfers responsibility for the design and delivery of programming, provided under Part II of Canada's *Employment Insurance Act*, from Canada to the Province, effective July 1, 2009. A human resources priority this year will be the successful transfer of federal government employees under this agreement and the recruitment of a number of additional employees to ensure a smooth transfer of this program.

French Language Services

The Department of Labour and Workforce Development has been carrying forward the momentum generated, and the progress achieved, by its predecessors in the delivery and implementation of French-language services in prior years. The department is committed to building on existing capacity to provide services in the French language to meet the needs of the Acadian and francophone community.

The department, in collaboration with the Office of Acadian Affairs, will implement a French-language Services Plan to enhance the department's capacity to deliver French-language services to its clients. Priorities for 2009-2010 include: increasing employee awareness of the provincial government's commitment to provide French-language services, promoting interest and involvement in service delivery, exploring opportunities to address French language community needs, and continuing to build departmental capacity to provide service in French through employee training in the French language.

6. Budget Context

Labour and Workforce Development			
Program and Service Area	**Budget 2008/09 Estimate**	**Budget 2008/09 Actual**	**Budget 2009/10 Estimate**
Ordinary Revenues, Fees and Recoveries	$35,790	$39,726	$137,363
TCA Purchase Requirements	$0	0	$2,130
Administration	$1,230	$867	$717
Policy	$3,112	$2,654	$1,718
Safety	$17,917	$16,137	$18,621
Labour Services	$6,701	$5,604	$6,694
Skills and Learning	$33,483	$42,148	$133,109
Total Gross Program Expenses	$62,443	$67,410	$160,859
Funded Staff (FTE's)	342.8	317.4	462.9

7. Information Technology and Communications

Labour and Workforce Development recognize the need to provide staff with the information tools they need to effectively manage their work.

The department has implemented the Activity Tracking System in the Occupational Health and Safety Division, and is expanding that to the Alcohol and Gaming and Technical Safety Areas. The department is working through its Web Committee to make more information available on line, and to ensure our communications are clear and timely. There has been a concerted communications effort during our Strategic Planning process to ensure our staff, stakeholders and partners were fully engaged, and annual updates will occur on the Plan as we move forward over the next 4 years.

The department continues its commitment to being proactive with its communications objective to keep Nova Scotians well informed of its many programs and services.

To respond to the needs and priorities of the programs and operations within the department, the following IT priorities have been identified for 2009/2010:

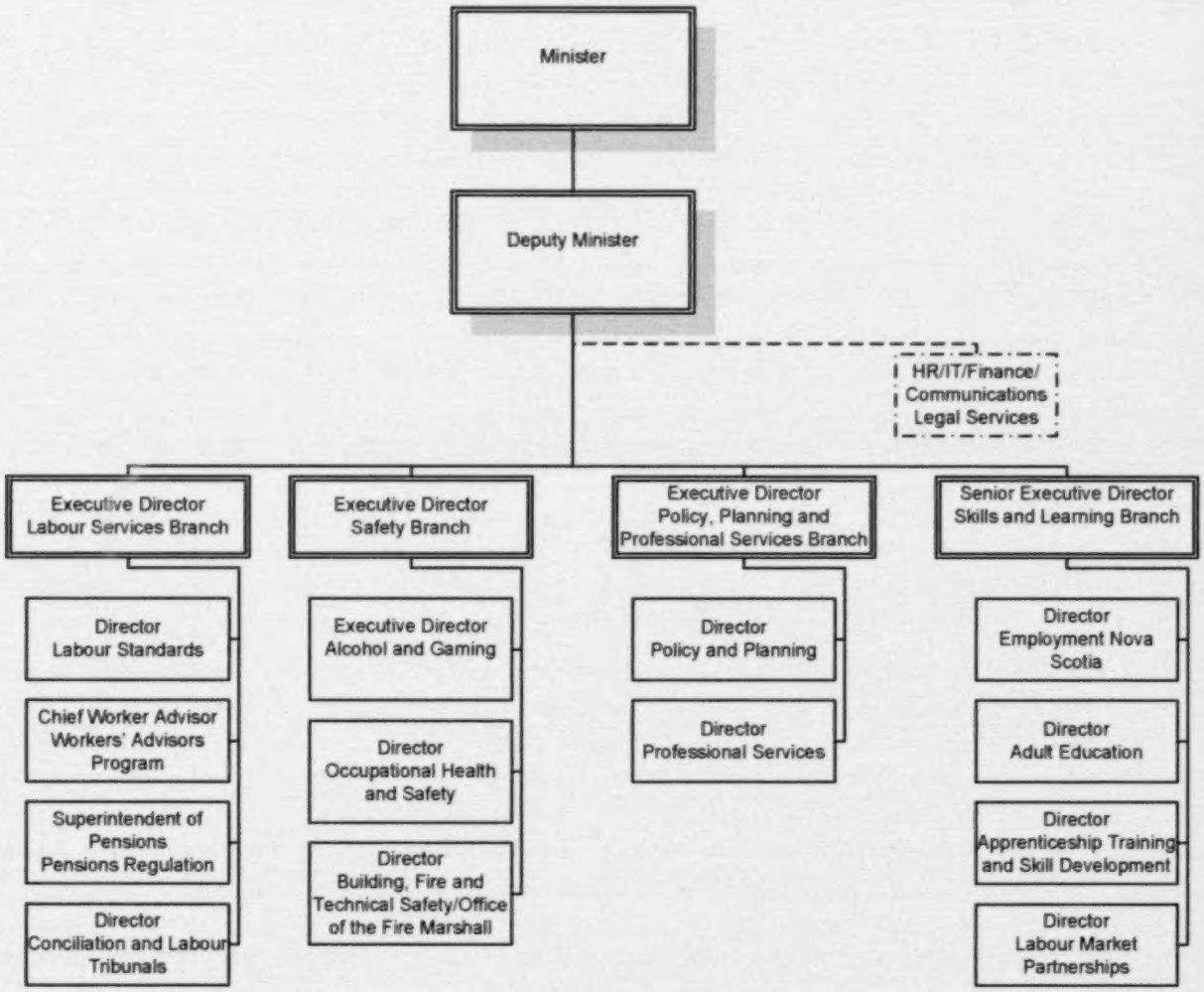
1. Maintain and improve where practical on the current delivery of IT infrastructure services. This would include HelpDesk and Desktop services that are provided at Head Office, metro and especially in regional locations across the Province.

2. Develop an IT Technology Strategy that would identify all the high-level functional requirements of the department where IT solutions need to be applied; would assess our current uses of systems and technologies; would assess solution options and recommend a suite of technology solutions for use in LWD; and provide a prioritized list of implementation projects.

3. Provide the necessary IT supports and technologies to enable a smooth transfer of the Labour Market Development Agreement (LMDA) programs and services to Nova Scotia. LWD assumes responsibility for these programs from the federal government on July 1, 2009.

4. Continue with the implementation of the Labour Market Programs Support System (LaMPSS). This is a significant project for the Province, and includes requirements definition, design, development and implementation of new processes and IT components to support the ongoing delivery of Labour Market programs across LWD, Immigration and Community Services.

Appendix A - Labour and Workforce Development Organizational Chart



Appendix B - Labour and Workforce Development Agencies, Boards, Commissions, Tribunals and Committees

13 Agencies, Boards, Commissions and Tribunals

- Apprenticeship Board
- Construction Industry Panel
- Crane Operators Appeal Board
- Elevators and Lifts Appeal Board
- Film Classifiers
- Fire Safety Advisory Council and Fire Safety Appeal Board
- Fuel Safety Board
- Labour Relations Board
- Labour Standards Tribunal
- Occupational Health and Safety Advisory Council
- Occupational Health and Safety Appeal Panel
- Power Engineers and Operators Appeal Committee
- Workers' Compensation Board

7 Committees

- Arbitration Advisory Committee
- Crane Operators Examination Committee
- Fire Services Advisory Committee
- Minimum Wage Review Committee
- Nova Scotia Building Code Advisory Committee
- Labour Mobility and Foreign Qualifications Recognition Advisory Committee